

AUSTIN FLY FISHERS

May 2021
Volume 23, Issue 5



Charles Cresswell with bass caught
on the Blanco River,
article on Page 5



FLY FISHERS
INTERNATIONAL
Charter Club

President's Message by David Bush

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As more Texans have gotten vaccinated, it's encouraging to see the number of COVID cases and deaths drop significantly. Hopefully those trends continue until COVID is nothing but a bad memory, and we can all get back to our normal pre-pandemic lives.

Toward that goal, Austin Fly Fishers tentatively plans to resume in-person meetings in June. That will be dependent on the City of Austin's COVID health rules which typically get updated monthly, but at this point we expect that we'll be able to do so. Our usual meeting site, the city's Northwest Rec Center, remains closed at this time, so we plan to meet outdoors and/or at alternative sites until we're able to utilize the Rec Center again. Ideas for a fun outdoor meeting are starting to come together for next month, so stay tuned. Until then, please join us for our online meeting on Facebook this Thursday, May 20, at 7:00 pm.

During the past month, a couple of interesting items have caught my attention. First is a documentary entitled "The Year Earth Changed," narrated by David Attenborough. The film documents some of the dramatic changes that have been observed in the animal world as we humans went into lockdown during the pandemic. It was fascinating to see how our reduced presence opened doors for wildlife that hadn't been available to them for decades. Aside from the interesting content, the cinematography is amazing, and kudos to the producer for recognizing the changes and documenting them in such a timely way. "The Year Earth Changed" is available to stream on AppleTV+ at tv.apple.com. If you aren't a subscriber, a 7 day free trial is available at that link. Or, if you've purchased an Apple device recently, you're entitled to one free year of AppleTV+ service.

The other attention-getter is a recent federal executive order which includes a section with the goal of "conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030." The Interior Department, along with other federal agencies, explains here: "The Executive Action will direct the Interior Department to outline steps to achieve the President's commitment to conserve at least 30% each of our lands and waters by the year 2030, as recommended by scientists, in order to safeguard our health, food supplies, biodiver-

sity, and the prosperity of every community. Interior will undertake the process with broad engagement, including agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen, outdoor enthusiasts, sovereign Tribal nations, States, Territories, local officials, and others to identify strategies that reflect the priorities of all communities."

Note that "fishermen" and "outdoor enthusiasts" are included in the list of stakeholders to be engaged. To that end, in March, NOAA solicited public input on fisheries which resulted in nearly 1500 pages of feedback. At this stage, there's no telling how any decisions resulting from this effort could affect recreational fishermen, but it bears continued attention. A website has been set up at huntfish3030.com to communicate information. A number of well-known fishing industry organizations are providing support including, but not limited to, B.A.S.S., IGFA, American Sportfishing Association, CCA, as well as our own Fly Fishers International. There is also a petition available at that site if you want to add your support. In any case, this is a federal initiative that bears following in the hope it is a positive for recreational fishermen.

Be safe,
Dave

Financial Report

by Jim Robinson

4/1/2021 to 4/30/2021

Begin Bal. Checking	\$20,620.24
Income:	
Total Income	\$00.00
Disbursements	
Total Disbursements	\$00.00
Net	\$00.00
Unencumbered:	\$12,943.89
Encumbered Funds:	
Casting for Recovery	\$2,365.52
SKIFF	\$5,310.83
Ending Bal-Checking	\$20,620.24

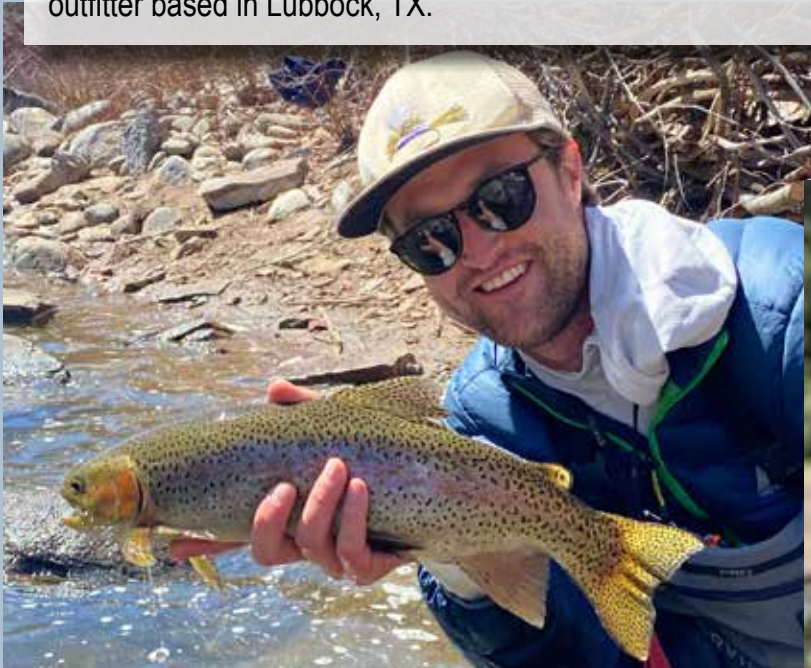
May Speaker – Charlie Schoenherr and Conner Grooms

Thursday, May 20 at 7:00 pm

www.facebook.com/atxflyfishers/

Topic: We will be discussing how to fish the Eagle River throughout the year. We will give a detailed breakdown of the hatch cycles and when they will begin to hatch.

Bio: We are Black Dog River Guides. Owned and Operated by Charlie Schoenherr and Conner Grooms. We are one of the only guide owned outfitters, and are based in Eagle Colorado just past Vail. Black Dog River Guides are committed to teaching you how to continue to catch great fish on a freestone river. Charlie has been guiding in Colorado and Texas for the past 5 years. He runs Abilities in the Outdoors, a for profit business that aims to get disabled individuals into the outdoors. He's also a former member and officer of AFF. Conner is a vet on the water, having grown up going to the Eagle River every year, he also guides for Fowl Plains Outfitter, a waterfowl outfitter based in Lubbock, TX.



SKIFF Program by Bob Maindelle

Dear Friends of S.K.I.F.F.,

SKIFF's most recent trip recipients were Willow and Athena Tripp of Fort Hood. The girls were accompanied by their mother, Ashley Patton, during their Thursday afternoon trip on April 29th, after the girls were done with their school day.

Ashley had planned this trip far in advance, and, as the date drew nearer, the weather forecast continued to worsen. As the girls boarded the boat, the wind shifted to the north and began to increase in velocity as the temperature began to drop slowly, all accompanied by an uncomfortable drizzle.

Ashley and I had discussed this contingency, and, she was certain the girls would be okay. She dressed them well, and we decided to go forward with our plans.

The girls' father, U.S. Army Sergeant Brian Tripp is currently away

from Fort Hood attending training at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Tripp, who has served for nine years, serves other soldiers by providing communications connectivity to remote locations.

Patton is herself a veteran, having served as a U.S. Army combat medic. She and Tripp met while on active duty.

Patton heard of the SKIFF program through a posting on the Fort Hood Area Events Facebook page.

We began the trip right at 4:30 p.m. and came off the water right before dark, around 8:00 p.m.

As they arrived, I welcomed the family, provided them with a safety briefing, adjusted the equipment to the girls' statures, and then helped them be successful.

We began the trip fishing for sunfish with poles to which fixed lengths of fishing line were attached. We tar-

geted small fish in shallow water with this simple approach, and then layered in more complexity as the trip continued on.

By the end of the girls' afternoon on the water, they were reading sonar, using custom-made MAL Lures to fish vertically for white bass in water well over thirty feet deep, and they did an amazing job at luring, hooking, and landing fish after fish.

In just over three hours' time the sisters landed sixty-two fish, including twenty-four sunfish, and thirty-eight white bass.

There are currently two more SKIFF trips on the books for the month of May, so, more to follow!

Thank you for your donations and support so when calls come in requesting fishing trips for soldiers' kids, the answer can always be "Yes!"



Undeterred by cool, rainy weather, Ashley Patton and her daughters, Athena (left) and Willow Tripp participated in a free Soldiers' Kids Involved in Fishing Fun (SKIFF) trip on April 29th, landing 62 fish in just over three hours' time.

Blanco King by Charles Cresswell

On The Blanco April 8th, 2021.

I've fly-fished the Blanco River since the fall of 2008. Ann and I had purchased the river front property during the spring of 2008. From the start I fished almost exclusively from a kayak, and from the beginning I noticed with awe the brutish Kings as I dubbed them that cruised the Blanco knowing they were the apex predators. In 2010 I had even hooked a King well over a mile up river. My Sage 7 wt. stood the test, but this Smallmouth King threw the hook on her fifth aerial. I learned I'd better have an anchor.

As the years have passed, only recently have my Kings once again begun cruising the Blanco after the 2015 archive shattering floods. This morning, April 8th, 2021, I fulfilled the promise I had made to myself. I waded across the new gravel bar with the deeper area, heavy with new aquatic growth, the goal; a quarter mile upstream my goal. Days of yard work at 75 earned the welcome return to the Blanco I've neglected during this Covid year. The day began overcast and in the low 60's. Wind at 7:15 was a zephyr, and the water had returned to its noted clarity. Within minutes of reaching my spot for the next two and half hours, a one pound bass darted out of the aquatic cover to start my day. No one was visible to witness anything that occurred the rest of my allotted time.

I'd seen only the Butkus like head follow briefly my white minnow like fly. Big bass had indeed returned to this section of the Blanco, keeping their distance from my offerings. I put on about a size 14 fuzzy popper as I was curious as to the variety of species that might still inhabit the Blanco. I checked my watch which reflected 9:15. Another sunfish had taken my little fuzzy, and was more spirited than most- then The King appeared to me, shockingly intent on my catch. This had happened a number of times in my experience, and as the swirling washing machine type agitation subsided, out from the swirling mud cloud- the King appeared. But this time, it didn't appear to have the Yellowbelly in its maw. Instead, this King, a Largemouth, had my little popper protruding from the middle of its upper jaw. Game on- no time to think.

I got my anchor overboard in time to keep my prize from the Aquatic vegetation. The cool drink clarity was being initially replaced by more mud swirls from the muscular thrashing of the unchallenged King of the Blanco. Here's a photo with my little popper still in the jaw bone. I've repeated to myself "I did it" well over a hundred times. I measured the bass with my hand spans at 24 inches. The measurement from the hatch on my kayak to the tip of the latch on my compartment holder is 23 inches (second photo). The conversion tables say this fish weighed between 7 and a little over 8 pounds. Whatever, it is by far the biggest bass I've caught, and am well satisfied.



Outings by Juan Shepperd

Spring in Texas is a wonderful time to fish. I hope you have been able to take a break from work, taxes and other projects, to fish. It's good for you. I'll share a few of my recent fishing experiences and tell you about upcoming trips.

As a reminder, club meetings are free. Club outings are limited to members. Unofficial club outings are open to anyone. I want to help plan trips you want to join. If you have ideas, suggestions, or want to lead an outing, let me know. I am happy to work with you and/or step aside and let you lead. Help is always appreciated.

As a fisherman, I'm an optimist. You have to be. The next big catch could be after the next cast, after all. That's how I see it. As more and more people get vaccinated, I look forward to things getting back to normal. Hold meetings in person. Maybe fish together. Put all this unfortunate Covid-business behind us. That's how I see the future. In the meantime, I'll keep planning and hosting outings.

Recap Colorado River Outing in April

Four of us got together and floated the lower Colorado River (LoCo) in April from Little Webberville Park to Big Webberville. Big shout out to Jack Lehman who came out and provided moral support and shuttled us. It rained the night before and a cold front blew in. Cold morning temperatures, fast water, and afternoon wind gave the fish the upper hand. We shook hands with a few fish. Tell you what, you want to feel good about your casting? Put me in a kayak in moving water with a paddle in one hand and a fly rod in the other. Then watch me cast. That'll make you smile. Glad I could offer my colleagues some laughs. I was happy with my one fish. In the end, even in tough conditions, we agreed, we all had a good time.

Recap Nueces River in May (non-sponsored, unofficial Club outing)

I fished the Nueces River on May 1st for a Mini-Bud Priddy Tournament outing hosted by the Alamo Fly Fishers. There were a few Austin Fly Fishers who made the drive down to Camp Wood, Texas, and maybe 20-25 Texas Women Fly Fishers (TWFF)--a hearty bunch of ladies and some great fly fishers! The Nueces River for those of you that haven't fished it, offers gin-clear water, small streams, round river rocks, and lots of low water crossings where you can park off the side of narrow county roads and access water easily. I waded it. You could bring a kayak or canoe. I saw a tractor cross it once. The Nueces River, supposedly, was Bud Priddy's favorite Hill Country stream. Easy to see why. I chatted with Carol Olewin at one crossing. We both agreed we shared his appreciation of this small scenic river. Great job to Austin Fly Fisher and Texas Women Fly Fishers' President Dana Williams on leading meetings and updating the group on some of what TWFF does. That club is dialed in. Big salute. Marcus Rodriguez from Living Waters Fly Shop spoke on Friday night and shared his experience of the river. While Spring is a great time to fish, it might be rainy. It was this weekend. People got off the water when lightning struck. After the rain delay, everyone caught fish. That night, around the campfire, I listened to Alamo Fly Fishers tell some stories about white bass runs and fly fishing experiences on the Texas Coast. I don't know if these fish stories were true or not, and it doesn't matter, they were entertaining. FYI, Alamo Fly Fishers hope to bring the Bud Priddy Tournament back strong next year (post-Covid). I look forward to it.

Upcoming: Brushy Creek One Fly Tournament (Round Rock, Texas)

May 22, 2021 Not an official club outing. One that may interest you. Living Waters Fly Shop is sponsoring the Annual Brushy Creek One Fly Tournament. You will need to register. You can find the registration link online on their website. Or you can go old school and call them. No shame in it. I call a lot of people. As I write this, space is available.

Upcoming: Long's Fish Camp (Kingsland, Texas) on the Llano River in May – Official Club Outing

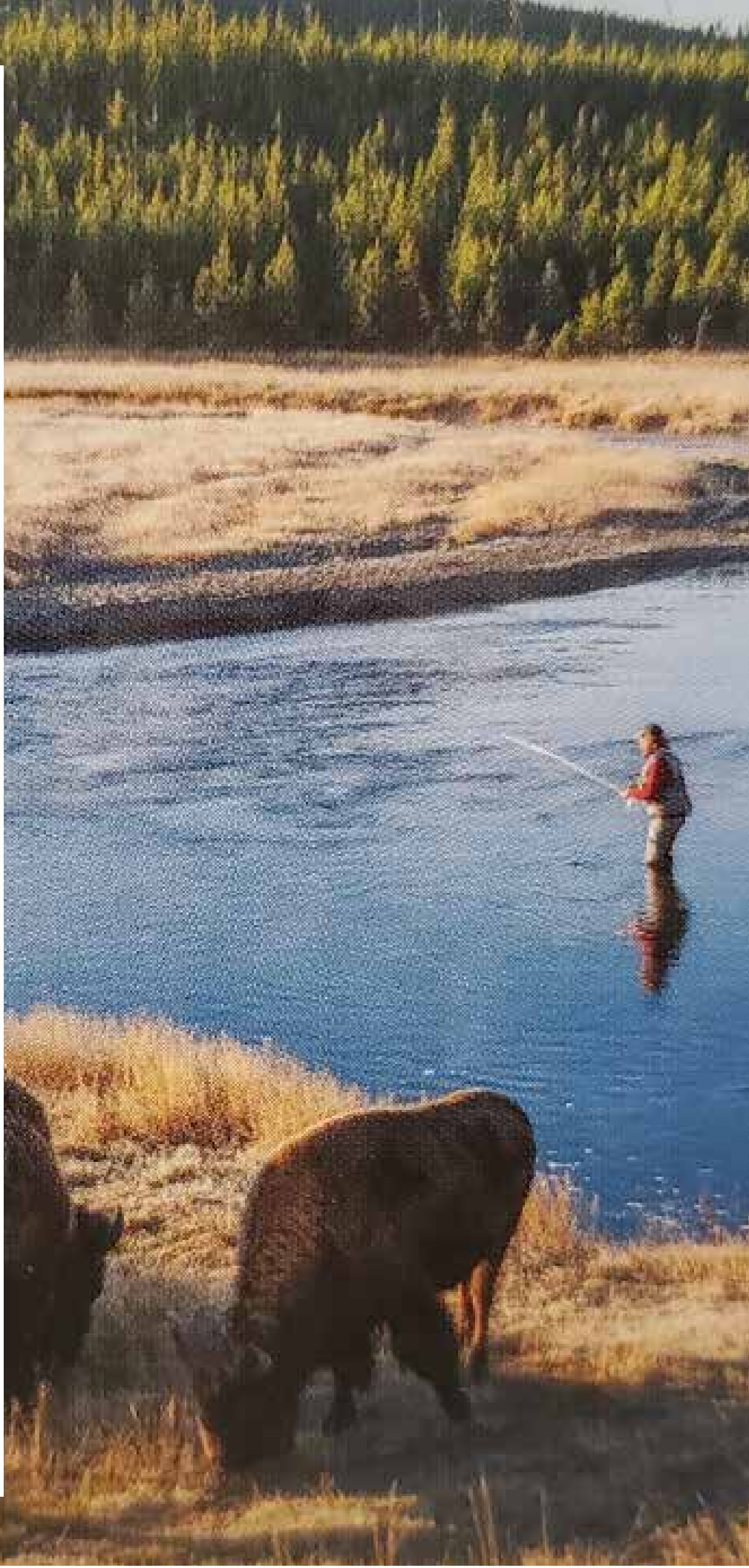
May 29, 2021 Big shout out to Jud Prince, who has generously volunteered to host the Club's May outing (moved from 3d week in May to the last weekend; Heads up, this is Memorial Day weekend). If you'd like to fish that Saturday, May 29, 2021 with the club, come out and meet there at 9:00 AM! Long's Fish & Dig (official name) is at 822 CR 321 in Kingsland, Texas, just off Texas HWY 1431. Bring \$8 to pay for parking. Long's is about 72 miles North-West of Austin and should take you about a hour and a half to get there. I grew up in the area and must confess I've never fished Long's. I am familiar with much of the Llano River. I know the Kingsland Slab, just downriver, and that's fun (my son caught his first Guadalupe Bass there). I hear great things about Long's. It has a wide variety of fish. Dana Williams caught a personal best 24-inch blue catfish on a 5 wt fly rod (guide verified). Most of the fishing on this river is wet wading. Bring your lunch and plenty of water. Bring a wide brimmed hat too. No shade. You don't need a boat. If you want to overnight, camping is available at Long's, for an extra fee. Hope you can make it!

Upcoming: Yellowstone National Park – Montana/Wyoming/Idaho - Unofficial June Outing

June 6 – June 10, 2021 A few of us will make the trip next month to Yellowstone National Park. We will fish the Firehole River, Gibbon River, and Madison Rivers inside the Park. They all fish well in June. I have some guides lined up. I like to pick their brain. Talk fishing. Flies. Life. Stuff. They know the best spots. They also know what areas to avoid. As some of you may have read, there was a recent grizzly bear mauling, unfortunately, just outside West Yellowstone, Montana last month. Man, fishing the Madison River alone, got too close to a moose carcass. Bear got mad and defended his food. Man is no longer with us. Bear has since been killed. Sad, sad news. Common? Not at all. Bear attacks are extremely rare. Still, I feel better knowing we have a guide.

I doubt we see any grizzly bears. Black bears, maybe. I do expect to see tons of bison and elk--and some coyotes. Spring is calving season for bison and elk and moose. Carnivores know that. It is also the start of the busy tourist season. I'm camping – and will eat at the many restaurants in the Park. I am not taking much stuff. I am hardly roughing it. There are lots of available places to stay and eat within the Park and just outside it. If you've never been, you should put Yellowstone National Park on your bucket list.

Since this is a fly fishing club, you'll be pleased to know these waters are fly fishing only. Barbless hooks. Artificial flies. No lead. No felt-bottom boots. Much of the Firehole in June offers superb dry fly fishing. If you like hunting, this fishing is as close to hunting as you'll get. It's not easy, with fish rising and you casting upstream to entice them with a drag-free presentation and a skilled hookset. The Gibbon offers a variety of waters with spectacular scenery. The Madison is a monster. It is formed inside the park where the Firehole and Gibbon Rivers meet. It flows West out of the park. It joins other rivers. It flows West and North and then East, across many, many states, eventually flowing South down through New Orleans into the Gulf of Mexico. A Madison River guide told me this a few years ago and I looked it up and he is right. Pretty amazing. Most of the fish in the 3 rivers we



will fish are non-native (brook, brown, rainbow). They were stocked a long time ago. No fish have been stocked since the 1950s. In Yellowstone, these fish have adapted and thrived despite the parks predators. (The four legged kind: Badgers, coyotes, otters, and wolverines. The winged kind: bald eagles, hawks, owls, and ospreys.) Resilient fish.

The most wonderful part of this fishing trip to me, however, will be Nature. These rivers are wild. Don't get me wrong. I love fishing Texas' Colorado, Frio, Guadalupe, Llano and San Marcos Rivers. In the Spring and Summer, I stand in these rivers, cast, strip, pause, lift my line, smile. Let rubber-tube hatch float by. Those people have as much a right to the river as me. Heck, sometimes, that's me in a boat. In Yellowstone, on these rivers, I won't see any canoes, kayaks, or inflatable rafts. No boats. No SUPs. No vessels of any kind are allowed on these rivers. It makes for really peaceful fishing. Magical, even. I'll stand in the river and hear running water. Snowmelt will increase the flow. Bison may graze streamside. I'll have the place to myself. Be one with nature. I'm pretty stoked. I'm gonna block everything out and be glad to be standing in a river waving a stick, so long as nothing hungry with four legs comes in the water looking for me.

If you can't make the June unofficial outing, and are interested in going on your own. I am happy to share details about what I know about the park. Where you can go online to learn more. Help you plan your own trip. Or hear about your experiences. I am sure I will learn a few things from you. My itinerary looks like this:

Unofficial Outing, Sunday, June 6 – Thursday, June 10, 2021

Day 1 – Fly direct from Austin to Bozeman. Overnight.

Day 2 – Enter and fish YNP.

Day 3 – Fish YNP.

Day 4 – Fish YNP.

Day 5 – Free. Depart Bozeman that evening for Austin.

If you have questions, please contact me about any of the outings.

Always happy to talk fishing.

Juan Shepperd

AFF Outings Coordinator

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Club Sponsors

The following individuals who made presentations to our club in 2017/2019. Please follow the links to get more information on the services they provide. You won't be disappointed.

Marcus Rodriquez – <http://livingwatersflyfishing.com/> Central Texas Guide

Capt. Billy Trimble – <http://trimbleflyfishing.com/> Fly Fishing Rockport/Texas Coastal Bend

Chris Johnson – <http://livingwatersflyfishing.com/> Living Waters Fly Shop and Central Texas Guide

Pat Dorsey – <http://www.bluequillangler.com/> Fly Fishing Colorado

Capt. Scott Hamilton – <http://www.flyfishingextremes.com/> Fly Fishing Florida's Atlantic Coast

Capt. Eric Glass – <http://www.captainericglass.com/> Fly Fishing South Padre Island

Kevin Stubbs – <http://www.expedition-outfitters.net/> Fly Fishing the Devils River

Kevin Hutchison – <http://hillcountryflyfishers.com/> Fly Fishing the Hill Country

Capt. Steve Soulé – <http://www.theshallowist.com/index.asp> Fly Fishing Galveston

Jeff Davis – <http://allwaterguides.com/jeff-davis/> Fly Fishig the lower Colorado River

Jud Cole – <http://centraltexasflyfishing.com/> Central Texas and Colorado

Capt. Rus Schwausch – <http://www.epicanglingadventure.com/> Fly Fishing Southwest Alaska

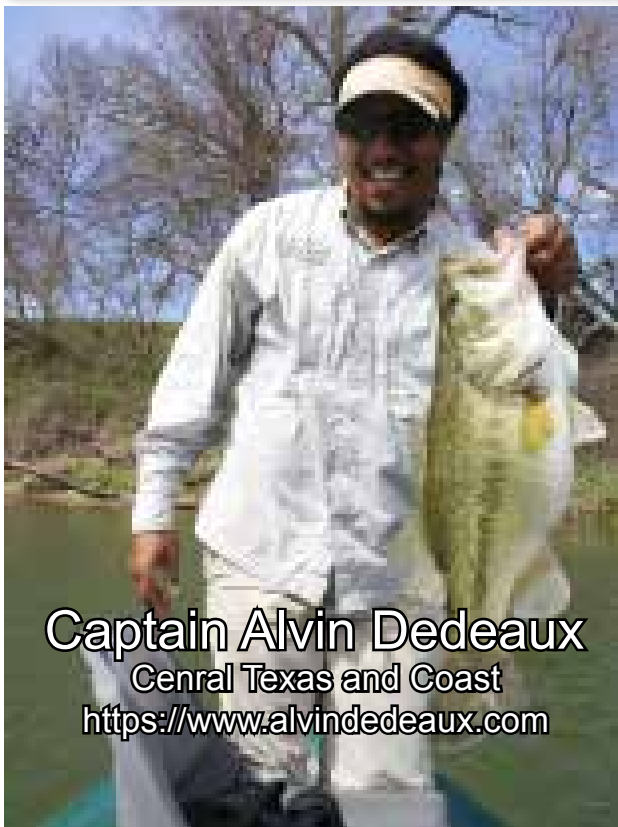
Nick Streit – <https://taosflyshop.com/flyguide/main> New Mexico and Southern Colorado

Capt. Randy and Truette Cawfield – <http://www.lagunamadre.net/styled-33/index.html>

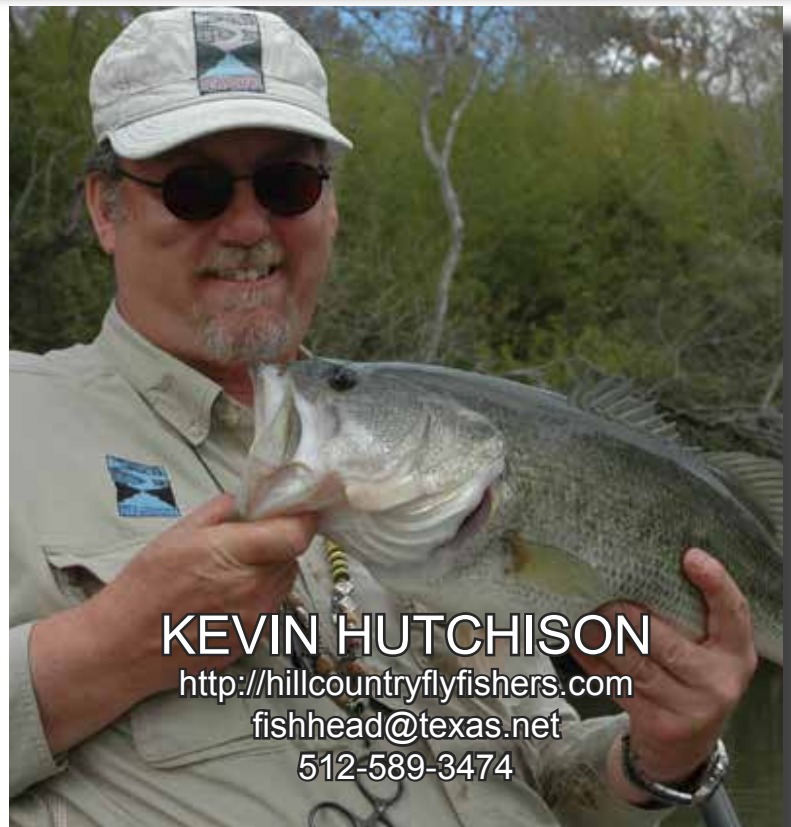
Lower Laguna Madre

Pat Vanek – BousqueValleyFlyFishing@gmail.com Rivers of Central TX

Capt. Alvin Dedeaux – <https://www.alvindedeaux.com> Central Texas and Texas Coast



Captain Alvin Dedeaux
Central Texas and Coast
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KEVIN HUTCHISON
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South Padre Island, Texas

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Shallow Water Flats Fishing
Texas Coastal Bend

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361-205-1266



Capt. Scott Hamilton
Fly Fish Jupiter, Florida

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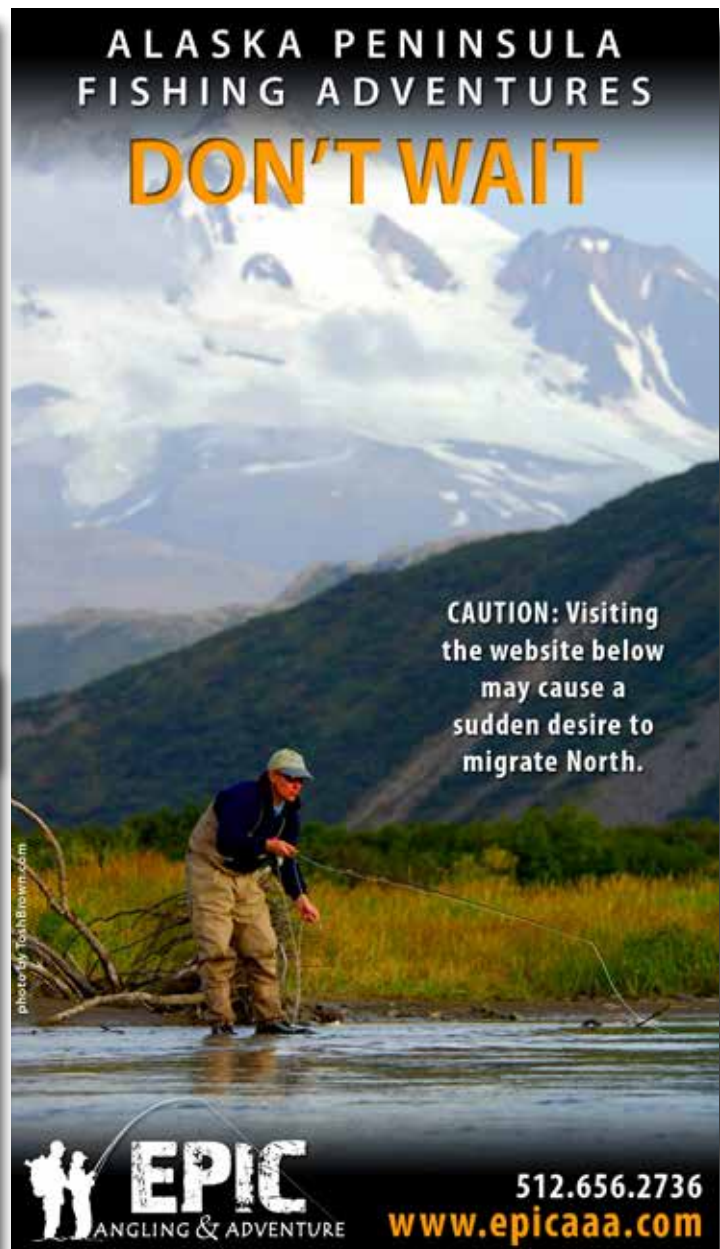
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